

Migratory Bird Hunting Digest 2008

Dove, Rail, Snipe, Teal and Woodcock



Green-winged teal

MARK S. RAITHEL ILLUSTRATION



Missouri Department of Conservation

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New mentoring option available for apprentice hunters

To help introduce adults to hunting, the Conservation Department now allows hunters age 16 and older who are not hunter-education certified to hunt with firearms, as long as they:

- first purchase the new Apprentice Hunter Authorization for \$10 wherever permits are sold
- then purchase a firearms hunting permit for the season they want to hunt; for example a Small Game Hunting Permit
- hunt in the immediate presence of a properly licensed hunter 21 years old or older who is hunter-education certified. The mentor must have a filled or unfilled permit for the prescribed season.

Note: The Apprentice Hunter Authorization allows the holder to purchase firearms permits throughout the permit year, and it can be purchased for two consecutive permit years. After the second year, the apprentice hunter will be required to become hunter-education certified if he or she wants to continue hunting on any firearms permit.

Missouri is a leader in hunter recruitment, and the Apprentice Hunter Authorization is just one more tool to help you share your hunting knowledge and tradition with your friends and family. Before next year's migratory bird season, encourage your apprentices to attend a hunter-education class or take the new online course. Information is available at mdc.mo.gov/8821.

Permit and Stamp Requirements

To pursue, take, possess and transport doves, rails, snipe, teal and woodcock in Missouri, a hunter must possess and carry the following, unless exempt:

1) a **Missouri permit¹ to hunt small game is required of:**

- Missouri residents age 16 through 64
- Nonresidents age 16 and older

An annual permit is available to residents for \$10 and nonresidents for \$75 from any permit vendor. A daily permit is also available to nonresidents from any permit vendor for \$11 per day.

Exemption: Missouri resident landowners hunting on their own land do not need a Missouri small game hunting permit, but the Migratory Bird Hunting Permit is required (see below).

2) **Missouri Migratory Bird Hunting Permit¹ is required of:**

- Residents and nonresidents age 16 and over

This permit is available for \$6 from any permit vendor. Purchase of this permit satisfies requirements for Migratory Game Bird Harvest Registration.

3) **Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp is required of:**

- Every teal hunter age 16 and over (Dove, rail, snipe, sora and woodcock hunters do not need this stamp.)

To be valid, the federal *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp* (duck stamp) must be signed in ink across the face. Federal duck stamps are available for \$15 at U.S. Post Offices and selected permit vendors.

Permit Requirements for Hunters Younger Than 16

Resident and nonresident hunters age 15 and under do not need to purchase permits to hunt doves, rails, snipe, teal and woodcock in Missouri. However, they must either be in the immediate presence of a properly licensed adult hunter, or have in their possession a valid Hunter Education Certificate Card while hunting.

Where to Purchase Permits

Purchase Missouri small game hunting permits and the *Missouri Migratory Bird Hunting Permit*:

- over the counter from any permit vendor
- by telephone anytime at (800) 392-4115²
- online anytime at www.wildlifelicenses.com/mo²

Purchase the federal *Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp* (duck stamp) at U.S. Post Offices and selected permit vendors.

¹All hunters born after Jan. 1, 1967, must complete an approved Hunter Education program and display their card before purchasing any firearms hunting permit.

²Credit card and \$2 per person surcharge required for phone and online purchase.

Three Species of Doves Provide Hunting Opportunities Statewide

Along with mourning doves, the Eurasian collared dove and the white-winged dove are legal species to hunt. This change made several years ago provides hunting opportunity for all three dove species while maintaining the integrity of the mourning dove limits. The combined daily bag limit of all three dove species is 12, with a combined possession limit of 24.

Mourning doves are found in every county in Missouri, with the greatest densities in the south-eastern portion. They benefit from cultivated areas and are especially abundant in fields, orchards or weedy areas.

The other two dove species have expanded their ranges into Missouri. Eurasian collared doves have been documented statewide; greatest concentrations are in the southeast, with numerous reports from around the state. White-winged doves, native to the southern United States, also are found statewide.

Predictions about distribution and numbers are difficult to make prior to the hunting season because dove migration depends upon the weather and food availability.

Doves prefer relatively open areas to search for seeds on the ground. Preferred food varies, but normally includes corn, sunflower seeds and small grain. Doves also eat seed from pigweed, crotons, panic grasses, foxtails and ragweed, but sunflowers seem to be the most dependable lure crop.

DOVE HUNTING ON PUBLIC LAND

Last year around 4,500 acres on almost 670 fields on 92 conservation areas were actively managed for doves. Managed dove hunting fields are planted in sunflowers, wheat, millet, buckwheat, corn or a combination of the above. Each field provides a different type of hunting experience.

To locate dove fields, contact the regional office in the area you want to hunt. Maps of areas that have dove fields are available from the Department's website at www.mdc.mo.gov/7469.

REMEMBER: Keep our public hunting areas litter free.

Be sure to pack out empty shotgun shells and shell boxes when you leave for the day.

REPORT YOUR BANDS

www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl

Bird banding programs provide valuable information on a wide variety of migratory game birds.

Bands recovered and reported by hunters provide important information about survival, migration, and harvest rates and distribution.

To report band numbers from all types of birds (except pigeons), go online at **www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl**.

You can also report bands by calling 1-800-327-BAND (2263).

You will receive a certificate of appreciation and information about the bird you reported. The band is yours to keep!

Thanks for doing your part to help manage migratory game birds.

Hunters Provide Valuable Dove Data by Reporting Bands and Collecting Wings

Mourning doves are one of the most widely distributed and abundant birds in North America. They also are a popular game bird that is hunted in 39 of the lower 48 states. In fact, more mourning doves are harvested each year than all other migratory bird species combined. Up-to-date survival and harvest rate information is critical to understanding the effects of annual hunting regulations on mourning dove populations, and banding is an important tool for obtaining this information.

Missouri, in cooperation with 31 other states, is participating in a nationwide mourning dove banding study. This study will:

- determine mourning dove harvest rates
- estimate annual survival
- provide information regarding the geographical distribution of harvest
- develop and refine techniques for a future long-term dove banding program.

During the study, more than 85,000 mourning doves will be banded in the participating states. Doves will be captured, aged and sexed, and then fitted with a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service band inscribed with an identification number and a 1-800 telephone number for band reporting.

It is important that hunters examine their mourning doves for leg bands. By reporting banded doves, you directly help manage this important migratory bird resource. If you harvest a banded mourning dove, follow the instructions above.

Missouri also is cooperating with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in collecting mourning dove wings from hunters. Randomly selected hunters will be asked to save one wing from each dove during the first week of the season and mail the wings (postage free) to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Hunters using high-use public areas may also be asked to provide dove wings as part of the monitoring effort. Data from the wings will be used to estimate annual productivity of the dove population, and eventually used in helping to establish hunting regulations.

Teal Status

Blue-winged teal are generally the second most numerous duck in North America (second only to mallards). The spring 2008 population estimate of 6.64 million blue-winged teal is similar to the 2007 estimate of 6.7 million and well above the long-term average of 4.5 million. Blue-winged teal breed in the prairies and parklands of the northern United States and Canada, and winter as far south as northern South America. Blue-winged teal are among the earliest duck species to migrate during fall (and the latest during spring), and most are well south of Missouri by the time the Missouri duck season opens. During 2006, the total estimated harvest of blue-winged teal in the Mississippi Flyway was 513,876, of which over half (293,318) were taken in Louisiana. Early migrations and extensive swamp and shallow marsh habitat in the lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley and along the Gulf Coast provide attractive habitat for blue-winged teal, which prefer shallow wetlands with flooded vegetation. Their preferred food consists of “moist-soil” vegetation such as smartweeds, millets, sedges, and spikerushes. Seeds, plus stem and leaf fragments of aquatic plants, are eaten as well as invertebrates such as insects, and snails.

Collectively, teal are among the smallest duck species in North America and their fast erratic flight can be a challenge to hunters. They also are considered prized table fare by hunters. Peak numbers of blue-winged teal in Missouri typically occur around mid-September following cool fronts. Their stay in Missouri is often short, but they may remain a few days longer in undisturbed shallow wetlands with flooded vegetation.

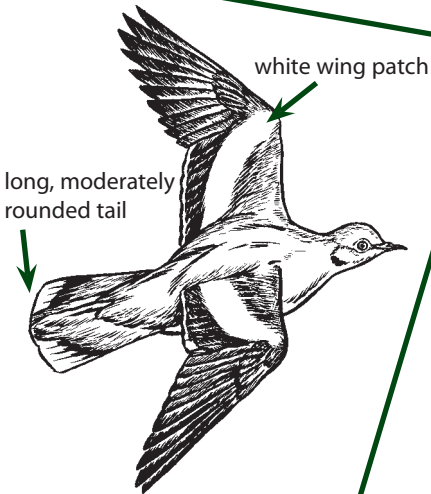
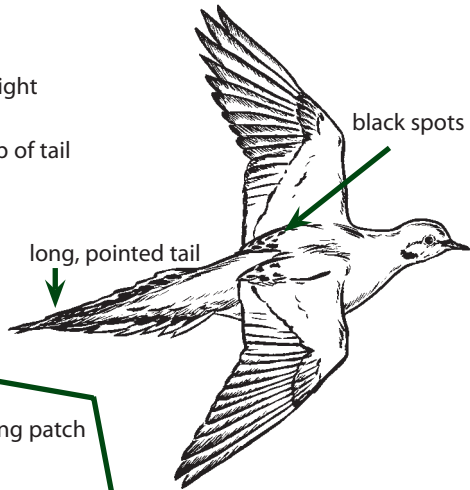
Green-winged teal, as well as cinnamon teal, are legal during the September season. Green-winged teal may comprise up to 25 percent of the harvest during some years, and a higher proportion of green-winged teal are harvested during the latter part of the teal season. Cinnamon teal are a western species that are rare in Missouri.

Hunters are reminded that other duck species are present in Missouri during September. Wood ducks reared in Missouri and some early migrant duck species other than teal present hunters with the responsibility of identifying their target before they shoot. A sunrise opening ensures adequate light for correct identification.

Know Your Doves

Mourning dove

- gray brown
- more rapid wing beat, erratic flight path than white-winged dove
- 12 inches from tip of beak to tip of tail
- call is a soft, inflected *cooAHoo* followed by several *coos*

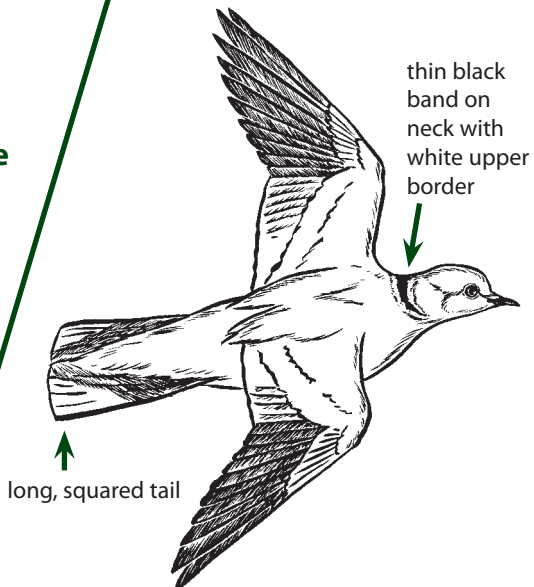


White-winged dove

- gray brown
- slightly larger than mourning dove
- call is a soft *hoohoo* *hoohoo* with the final note descending

Eurasian collared dove

- gray
- 15 inches from tip of beak to end of tail
- call is a three-part *coo* with similar tone to a domestic pigeon



Rail, Snipe and Woodcock Identification Tips

The following species also are legal to hunt during the migratory bird season. See page 16 for season dates and limits. Below are some descriptive details to help you find and identify these birds.

- **VIRGINIA RAIL**, 9 1/2 inches from tip of beak to tip of tail, forage in marshes and swamps for snails and earthworms. Adults have a black back with rusty wing patches, gray face, and reddish bill and legs. The underparts are cinnamon with heavily barred black and white flanks. Their call is a series of one- and two-syllable notes, *kik, kik, kik, kidik, kidik, kidik*.
- **SORA**, 9 inches from tip of beak to tip of tail, are common migrants that forage in marshes, swamps, wet pastures and flooded fields. Adults have a short, yellow bill and black face. Cheeks and breast are gray with black- and white-barred belly. The back is dark brown mixed with reddish tan and streaked with white. The call of this rail species is a loud, descending, nasal whinny.
- **WILSON'S (COMMON) SNIPE**, 11 inches from tip of beak to tip of tail, forage in marshes, swamps, wet pastures, crop stubble and drainage ditches. They have a long bill, plump body, and black- and white-streaked head. The back is brown and black with strong white streaks. When surprised, it takes off in a zigzag pattern and calls a harsh *scraip, scraip*.
- **AMERICAN WOODCOCK**, or timberdoodle, are 11 inches from tip of beak to tip of tail. They forage in young woodlands near water, moist pastures and forested floodplains. Most common in eastern Missouri along the Mississippi lowlands, they are distinguished by extremely long bills, round, plump bodies, short tails and legs, and large black eyes. The back is dark and the underparts buff. When flushed, its rounded, short wings make a startling whirring sound.

Missourians have a new way to display their support for conservation: a new bald eagle conservation heritage license plate, offered by the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation.

For a \$25 annual donation to the foundation, you can order your own eagle, bluebird or deer plate any time, regardless of your current plate expiration date. The foundation directs all donations to conservation projects, such as migratory bird habitat protection and enhancement. You can pay the donation and pick up a "Conservation Heritage License Plate Emblem Use Authorization Form" at any permit vendor, order via www.mochf.org or by calling 1-800-392-4115.

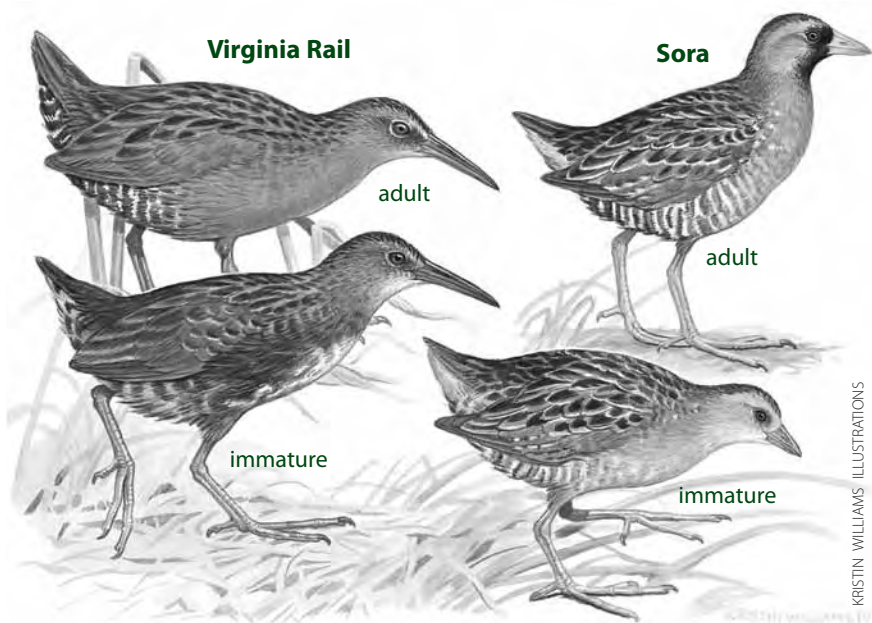


Investing in Your Conservation Legacy



Wilson's Snipe

American Woodcock



Virginia Rail

adult

Sora

adult

immature

immature

KRISTIN WILLIAMS ILLUSTRATIONS

Federal Regulations Summary

In addition to state regulations, the following federal rules apply to the taking, possession, transportation, shipment and storage of waterfowl and other migratory game birds. **Note:** This is only a summary. Refer to Title 50, Part 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

RESTRICTIONS: No person shall take waterfowl and/or other migratory game birds:

- ▶ With a trap, snare, net, rifle, pistol, swivel gun, shotgun larger than 10-gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fishhook, poison, drug, explosive or stupefying substance.
- ▶ With a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells, unless it is plugged with a one-piece filler which is incapable of removal without disassembling the gun.
- ▶ From a sink box, a low-floating device having a depression affording the hunter the means of concealment beneath the surface of the water.
- ▶ From or with the aid or use of a car or other motor-driven land conveyance, or any aircraft, except that paraplegics and single or double amputees of the legs may take from any stationary motor vehicle or stationary motor-driven land conveyance. Paraplegic means an individual afflicted with paralysis of the lower half of the body with involvement of both legs, usually due to disease of or injury to the spinal cord.
- ▶ From or by means of any motorboat or sailboat unless the motor has been completely shut off and/or the sail furled, and its progress therefrom has ceased.
- ▶ By the use or aid of live decoys. All live, tame or captive ducks and geese shall be removed for a period of 10 consecutive days prior to hunting, and confined within an enclosure which substantially reduces the audibility of their calls and totally conceals such tame birds from the sight of migratory waterfowl.
- ▶ Using records or tapes of migratory bird calls or sounds, or electrically amplified imitations of bird calls.
- ▶ By driving, rallying or chasing birds with any motorized conveyance or any sailboat to put them in the range of the hunters.
- ▶ By the aid of baiting (placing feed such as corn, wheat, salt, or other feed to constitute a lure or enticement), or on or over any baited area. Hunters should be aware that a baited area is considered to be baited for 10 days after the removal of the bait, and it is not necessary for the hunter to know an area is or was baited to be in violation. Agricultural areas must be prepared in accordance with official recommendations to be legally hunted. It is a separate offense to place bait on or adjacent to an area that causes, induces or allows another to hunt by the aid of bait or over a baited area.

BE AN ETHICAL HUNTER

- ✓ **Respect Other Hunters**—Your enjoyment, and theirs, will result from mutual courtesy in the field.
- ✓ **Respect the Rules**—Know all state and federal regulations.
- ✓ **Respect Biology**—We share responsibility for migratory birds and their habitat throughout North America.
- ✓ **Respect the Hunting Tradition**—Setting up too close to other hunters is neither safe nor ethical.
- ✓ **Respect the Resource**—Use nontoxic shot; and be sure that birds are in range and that you identify your target before shooting.

► While possessing shot (either in shotshells or as loose shot for muzzle-loading) other than steel shot or such shot approved as nontoxic by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. This applies for hunting teal and other waterfowl only and for hunting on areas designed as nontoxic shot zones. (See page 12.)

CLOSED SEASON: No person shall take migratory game birds during the closed season.

SHOOTING OR HAWKING HOURS: No person shall take migratory game birds except during the hours open to shooting and hawking as prescribed.

DAILY BAG LIMIT: No person shall take in any one day more than one daily bag limit.

FIELD POSSESSION LIMIT: No person shall possess more than one daily bag limit while in the field or while returning from the field to one's car, hunting camp, motel, etc.

WANTON WASTE: All migratory game birds killed or crippled shall be retrieved, if possible, and retained in the custody of the hunter in the field.

POSSESSION OF LIVE BIRDS: Wounded birds reduced to possession shall be immediately killed and included in the daily bag limit.

TAGGING: No person shall give, put or leave any migratory game birds at any place or in the custody of another person unless the birds are tagged by the hunter with the following information:

1. The hunter's signature.
2. The hunter's address.
3. Hunting permit number.
4. The total number of birds involved, by species.
5. The dates such birds were killed.

No person or business shall receive or have in custody any migratory game birds belonging to another person unless such birds are properly tagged.

DRESSING: No person shall completely field dress any migratory game bird (except doves) and then transport the birds from the field. The head or one full-feathered wing must remain attached to all such birds while being transported from the field to one's home or to a commercial preservation facility.

SHIPMENT: No person shall ship migratory game birds unless the package is marked on the outside with: (a) the name and address of the person sending the birds, (b) the name and address of the person to whom the birds are being sent, and (c) the number of birds, by species, contained in the package.

PERMITS AND STAMPS: Waterfowl hunters 16 years of age and over must carry on their person a valid federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (duck stamp) signed in ink across the face by the user.

DUAL VIOLATION: Violation of state migratory bird regulations is also a violation of federal regulations.

Shot Requirements

Shells possessed or used while hunting teal statewide, or doves, rails, snipe and woodcock as designated by posting on public areas, must be loaded with material approved as nontoxic by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

As of June 2008, shot types approved as being nontoxic are:

- bismuth-tin
- iron (steel)
- iron-tungsten
- iron-tungsten-nickel
- tungsten-bronze (2 types)
- tungsten-iron-copper-nickel
- tungsten-matrix
- tungsten-polymer
- tungsten-tin-iron
- tungsten-tin-bismuth
- tungsten-tin-iron-nickel

Check the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service website at www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/issues/nontoxic_shot/nontoxic.htm for up-to-date information.

Tips for Shooting Steel Shot

If you are planning to hunt on an area that requires the use of nontoxic shot, take the time to learn how steel or other nontoxic shot works with your shotgun. One reason people have trouble shooting steel shot is because they practice with lead and then shoot steel when they hunt.

Steel does not deform like lead and, therefore, flies straighter. A typical steel shot string is 1/2 the size of the same size lead. This means you must

be a better shot to put the smaller shot string on target, but when you are on target there are more pellets available to hit the target. Nontoxic shot consistently patterns better than lead, so often improved cylinder and modified chokes are sufficient. In some situations, full chokes exhibit a distorted and ineffective pattern.

Nontoxic steel shot is faster than lead. The shooter, therefore, needs to take a shorter lead when firing in front of a bird.

Most hunters aren't effective shooters beyond 20 yards, but they often misjudge the distance and fire at birds beyond that range. Find your effective range with steel shot, then practice judging that distance before you go hunting.

The Conservation Department's outdoor skills specialists offer classes in using nontoxic shot. For information, call the regional office near you. See page 15 for telephone numbers.

Some Conservation Areas Require Nontoxic Shot Only

As of March 1, 2007, a nontoxic shot only regulation for all hunting with a shotgun began at 21 conservation areas that have larger wetlands where potentially sizeable numbers of waterfowl and shorebirds concentrate in the fall and spring.

The nontoxic shot regulation on these areas will eliminate the deposition of lead shot, ingestion of which can be fatal to all birds including doves and scavenging birds such as eagles that feed on waterfowl with lead shot in the carcass. Mounting evidence points to lead poisoning occurring in over 30 species of birds other than waterfowl.

The nontoxic shot rule will apply to all hunting on these areas with a shotgun including dove, turkey, quail, rabbit and squirrel. Since 1991, waterfowl hunters in Missouri have used nontoxic shot for all duck, geese and coot hunting.

Many of the 21 conservation areas included in the new nontoxic shot requirement offer good dove hunting, which can be a significant source of lead shot poisoning in birds. Good quality nontoxic shot shell alternatives for all gauges are available commercially at a reasonable cost. Modern steel and bismuth/tin shot shells are effective alternatives for taking birds.

Use or possession of lead shot is prohibited for hunting on the following Department of Conservation areas:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| ● Black Island | ● Fountain Grove | ● Montrose |
| ● Bob Brown | ● Four Rivers | ● Nodaway Valley |
| ● Columbia Bottom | ● Grand Pass | ● Otter Slough |
| ● Cooley Lake | ● B.K. Leach Memorial | ● Schell-Osage |
| ● Coon Island | ● Little Bean Marsh | ● Settle's Ford |
| ● Duck Creek | ● Little River | ● Ted Shanks |
| ● Eagle Bluffs | ● Marais Temps Clair | ● Ten Mile Pond |

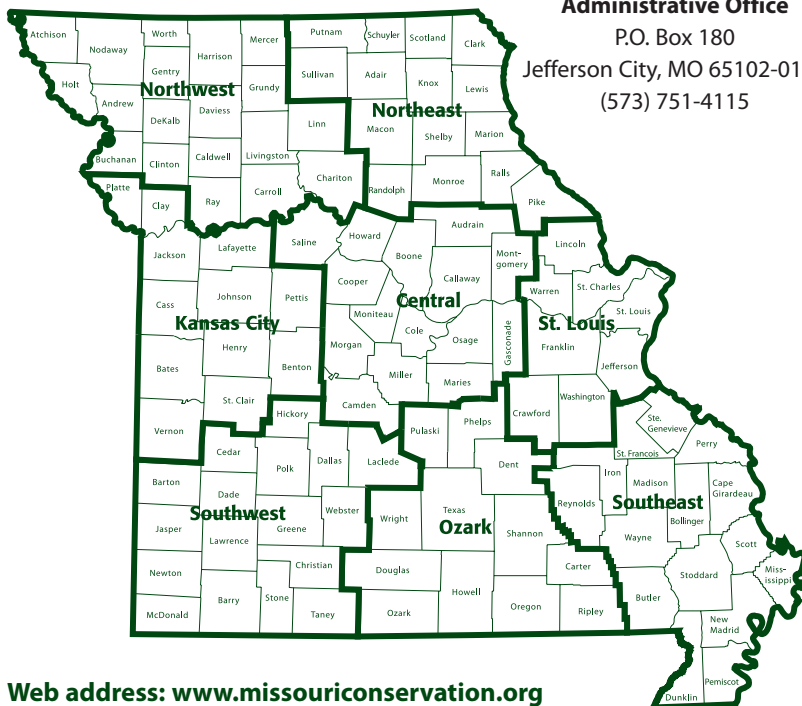
Sunrise and Sunset at Jefferson City, Mo.

Central Standard Time

	SEPT.		OCT.		NOV.		DEC.	
DAY	Rise A.M.	Set P.M.	Rise A.M.	Set P.M.	Rise A.M.	Set P.M.	Rise A.M.	Set P.M.
1	6:38	7:38	7:05	6:51	7:36	6:08	7:08	4:48
2	6:39	7:36	7:06	6:49	7:37	6:07	7:09	4:48
3	6:40	7:35	7:07	6:48	6:38	5:06	7:10	4:48
4	6:41	7:33	7:08	6:46	6:39	5:05	7:11	4:47
5	6:42	7:32	7:09	6:45	6:40	5:04	7:12	4:47
6	6:43	7:30	7:10	6:43	6:41	5:03	7:12	4:47
7	6:44	7:29	7:11	6:42	6:42	5:02	7:13	4:47
8	6:45	7:27	7:12	6:40	6:44	5:01	7:14	4:47
9	6:45	7:26	7:12	6:39	6:45	5:00	7:15	4:48
10	6:46	7:24	7:13	6:37	6:46	4:59	7:16	4:48
11	6:47	7:22	7:14	6:36	6:47	4:58	7:17	4:48
12	6:48	7:21	7:15	6:34	6:48	4:58	7:17	4:48
13	6:49	7:19	7:16	6:33	6:49	4:57	7:18	4:48
14	6:50	7:18	7:17	6:31	6:50	4:56	7:19	4:49
15	6:51	7:16	7:18	6:30	6:51	4:55	7:19	4:49
16	6:52	7:14	7:19	6:28	6:52	4:55	7:20	4:49
17	6:52	7:13	7:20	6:27	6:53	4:54	7:21	4:49
18	6:53	7:11	7:21	6:26	6:54	4:53	7:21	4:50
19	6:54	7:10	7:22	6:24	6:56	4:53	7:22	4:50
20	6:55	7:08	7:23	6:23	6:57	4:52	7:22	4:51
21	6:56	7:06	7:24	6:22	6:58	4:51	7:23	4:51
22	6:57	7:05	7:25	6:20	6:59	4:51	7:23	4:52
23	6:58	7:03	7:26	6:19	7:00	4:50	7:24	4:52
24	6:59	7:02	7:27	6:18	7:01	4:50	7:24	4:53
25	7:00	7:00	7:28	6:16	7:02	4:50	7:25	4:54
26	7:00	6:59	7:30	6:15	7:03	4:49	7:25	4:54
27	7:01	6:57	7:31	6:14	7:04	4:49	7:25	4:55
28	7:02	6:55	7:32	6:13	7:05	4:49	7:26	4:56
29	7:03	6:54	7:33	6:12	7:06	4:48	7:26	4:56
30	7:04	6:52	7:34	6:10	7:07	4:48	7:26	4:57
31			7:35	6:09			7:26	4:58

This table is for Jefferson City and points on the same longitude north and south. For locations east, subtract one minute for each 13.5 miles of airline distance. For locations west, add one minute for each 13.5 miles. Sunrise and sunset from Sept. 1 to Nov. 2 have been converted to Daylight-Savings Time.

Missouri Department of Conservation Offices



Northwest Region

701 James McCarthy
Drive
St. Joseph, MO 64507
(816) 271-3100

Kansas City Region

3424 N.W. Duncan Road
Blue Springs, MO 64015
(816) 655-6250

Southwest Region

2630 N. Mayfair
Springfield, MO 65803
(417) 895-6880

Central Region

1907 Hillcrest Drive
Columbia, MO 65201
(573) 884-6861

Ozark Region

551 Joe Jones Blvd.
West Plains, MO 65775
(417) 256-7161

Northeast Region

3500 S. Baltimore
Kirksville, MO 63501
(660) 785-2420

St. Louis Region

2360 Highway D
St. Charles, MO 63304
(636) 441-4554

Southeast Region

2302 County Park Drive
Cape Girardeau, MO
63701
(573) 290-5730

2008 HUNTING SEASONS

SPECIES	SEASON DATES	SHOOTING HOURS	DAILY BAG LIMIT	POSSESSION LIMIT
MOURNING, COLLARED & WHITE-WINGED DOVES	Sept. 1–Nov. 9	One-half Hour Before Sunrise to Sunset‡	12*	24*
WILSONS (COMMON) SNIPE	Sept. 1–Dec. 16		8	16
SORA & VIRGINIA RAIL	Sept. 1–Nov. 9		25*	25*
AMERICAN WOODCOCK	Oct. 15–Nov. 28		3	6
BLUE-WINGED, GREEN-WINGED & CINNAMON TEAL	Sept. 6–Sept. 21	Sunrise to Sunset‡	4*	8*

*Combined total of all species.

‡See page 14 for sunrise/sunset table.

HARVEST SURVEY NEEDS YOUR RESPONSE

When you purchase your Migratory Bird Hunting Permit, the vendor asks you a series of questions about your last year's migratory bird hunting activities. The answers you provide place you in a category with other migratory bird hunters by type and amount of hunting activity. This allows the Conservation Department and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, through the cooperative effort known as the Migratory Bird Harvest Information Program, to use harvest surveys to sample hunters from each category. This survey information is extremely important and is considered when establishing migratory bird hunting seasons each year. Your cooperation in supplying this information is vital. If you are one of the Missouri migratory bird hunters selected to receive a survey, please complete and return it even if you did not hunt or were unsuccessful while afield. All the information you provide is important. By completing the survey, you are doing your part to help manage these important migratory birds.